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Soldiers remember fallen comrade at FOB Falcon

Pfc. Jason Dangel
4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD — “Corporal McKinzie’s actions reflect the finest traditions of the American combat Soldier – moving to the sound of guns and fighting to protect his fellow Soldiers. No greater love has he, than to lay down his life for his brothers.”

With these words, a solemn Lt. Col. James Danna, commander, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery, 1st Armored Division, bade farewell to one of his Soldiers during a memorial ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

Cpl. Antoine McKinzie, assigned to Battery B, 4-27 FA, was killed when his convoy came under attack by small-arms fire. The battery is serving with 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

McKinzie, from the turret, called off directional fire over the patrol radio network while manning his machine gun to gain and maintain contact with the enemy as a gun battle ensued, said Danna.

“Cpl. McKinzie died fighting for his friends. He died fighting for his country – he died fighting for what he believed in,” Danna said.

“In my book Cpl. Antoine McKinzie is a true hero, and his spirit will live on forever,” he continued.

Known to many of his friends as “Mack Ten,” the fun-loving Indianapolis native was also known by his comrades to be one of the hardest working Soldiers in Btry. B.

The 25-year-old corporal graduated high school in May 2000 and later received a degree in Computer Design Drafting Technology from ITT Technical Institute in 2002.

He enlisted in the Army on Sept. 11, 2003, and arrived at his first duty assignment in Baumholder, Germany, in February 2004.

Shortly after arriving in Germany, he deployed with Battery B, 4-27 FA in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“I never had to worry about Cpl. McKinzie doing the hard right over the easy wrong,” said Capt. Charles Cogger, commander, Battery B, 4-27 FA.

“Cpl. McKinzie was an ideal Soldier for the younger Soldiers to look up to,” he said.

Even though McKinzie constantly strived toward excellence, he always made time for football and his favorite team.

“He would always talk about his favorite team, the New England Patriots, and how Tom Brady is the greatest player ever,” Cogger said.

Cogger also mentioned McKinzie’s love for football video games and how many nights were spent behind his gaming system playing as the Patriots, winning Super Bowl after Super Bowl.

Everyone in Battery B had a close relationship with McKinzie because of his gregarious personality and goal-driven attitude, said Sgt. Christopher Ross, a close friend and teammate.

Ross also talked about McKinzie’s love for the New England Patriots and how he would brag every time they won a game.

“Football was his thing,” said Ross. “We were always arguing about who was better than the Patriots, but every Monday morning at formation, he would leave and say ‘Yep, another win for the Patriots.’”

Ross said the one thing he remembers most about his friend was the smile he always had on his face.

“He always presented himself as if he had no worries,” Ross explained. “I remember talking with him after we got extended during OIF I about how much fun he was going to have when we got back to Germany.”

“I, and the entire “Bear” family, are dearly and truly sorry to see such a fine Soldier as he leave our ranks,” Ross said. “‘Mack Ten’ will always be kept in our thoughts as well as our hearts. God willing and God speed Cpl. McKinzie.”



Battery commander says goodbye.

BAGHDAD – Capt. Charles Cogger, commander, Battery B, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, says goodbye to one of his Soldiers during a memorial ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon Friday.

(U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel, 4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)



Soldiers gather to say goodbye.

BAGHDAD – Dozens of Soldiers gather at the Steel Falcon Chapel to honor their fallen friend during a memorial ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon Friday.

(U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel, 4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)



Honor the fallen.

BAGHDAD — A memorial display stands for Cpl. Antoine McKinzie, Battery B, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, during a memorial service at Forward Operating Base Falcon Friday.

(U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel, 4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)



Battalion commander remembers his Soldier.

BAGHDAD – Lt. Col James Danna, commander, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, says goodbye to one of his Soldiers during a memorial ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon Friday.

(U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel, 4th BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.)